B. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-57 and 74-103 are withdrawn.

Claims 64-68 and 104-107 are cancelled without prejudice.

108. (new) A method for constructing a bat having a longitudinal axis comprising the steps of:

forming an elongate one-piece tubular striking member having a proximal end, a distal end, a striking region therebetween, and a first juncture section adjacent the proximal end of the striking member converging toward the axis on progressing toward the proximal end, the proximal end having a first inner diameter;

forming an elongate one-piece handle member of composite material having a first length, a proximal end, a distal end and a second juncture section adjacent the distal end of the handle member, the handle member diverging from the axis on progressing toward the distal end to a second outer diameter that is greater than the first inner diameter, the second juncture section having a second length that is less than thirty percent of the first length;

assembling the striking member and the handle member by inserting the handle member into the striking member with the outer surface of the second juncture section of the handle member being overlapped by the inner surface of the first juncture section of the striking member; and

joining the striking member to the handle member, such that at least a first portion of the first juncture section directly contacts at least a first portion of the second juncture section, to provide a rigid interconnection between the striking member and the handle member.

109. (new) The method of claim 108, wherein, in the joining step, adhesive is applied between the first and second juncture sections and cured, whereby at least a second

portion of the first juncture section is adhesively joined to at least a second portion of the second juncture section.

110. (new) The method of claim 108, wherein the striking member is formed of a material having a first specific gravity and the handle member is formed of a composite material having a second specific gravity different from the first specific gravity.

111. (new) The method of claim 108, wherein the second juncture section of the handle member is formed in a configuration complementary to the first juncture section of the striking member.

112. (new) The method of claim 108, wherein the step of forming the handle member comprises positioning plural composite layers adjacent each other to form a tubular member, and curing the layers.

113. (new) The method of claim 112, wherein the step of forming the handle member comprises the steps of positioning plural composite layers containing structural fibers therein adjacent each other such that each layer is tubular, and orienting the layers such that the majority of the layers have fibers extending at an angle less than about 50° relative to the longitudinal axis of the handle member.

114. (new) The method of claim 108, wherein at least one molding member is impressed against one of the inner surface of the first juncture section and the outer surface of the second juncture section during forming to produce spaced apart projections on at least one of the first and second juncture sections.

115. (new) The method of claim 114, wherein the projections are formed as elongate ribs extending substantially longitudinally along at least one of the first and second juncture sections.

116. (new) The method of claim 115, wherein the ribs are positioned such that at least a portion of the ribs provide the direct contact between the first and second juncture sections.

117. (new) The method of claim 114, wherein the molding member produces projections in a range of 0.002 to 0.005 inch in height.

118. (new) The method of claim 108, wherein the striking member is formed from a material selected from the group consisting of a metal, wood, a fiber reinforced composite material, and a non-metallic material.

119 (new) The method of claim 108, further comprising the step of inserting a weighed plug into the proximal end of the handle member, and coupling the weighted plug to the handle member.

120 (new) The method of claim 119, wherein the weighted plug weighs in the range of 0.5 to 7 ounces, and has a length in the range of 1.0 to 4.0 inches..

121 (new) The method of claim 108, further comprising the step of inserting a tubular insert within the striking member, such that the tubular insert can move independently of the striking member upon impact with a ball.

122. (new) A method for constructing a bat comprising the steps of

forming an elongate cylindrical striking member having a first length, a first proximal end, a first distal end, and a first juncture section adjacent the first proximal end, the first juncture section having an inner surface and a first juncture section length that is less than thirty percent of the first length;

forming an elongate one-piece handle member of composite fiber-reinforced material having a second length, a second proximal end, a second distal end and a second juncture section adjacent the second distal end, the second juncture section having an outer surface and a second juncture section length that is less than thirty percent of the second length;

inserting the handle member into the first distal end of the striking member; and

pulling the second proximal end of the handle member through the first proximal end of the striking member until only the second juncture section of the handle member is overlapped by the striking member, and at least a portion of the outer surface of the second juncture section firmly and directly contacts at least a portion of the inner surface of the first juncture section of the striking member.

123. (new) The method of claim 122, wherein, in the joining step, adhesive is applied between the first and second juncture sections and cured, whereby at least a second portion of the first juncture section is adhesively joined to at least a second portion of the second juncture section.

124. (new) The method of claim 122, wherein the striking member is formed of a material having a first specific gravity and the handle member is formed of a composite material having a second specific gravity different from the first specific gravity.

125. (new) The method of claim 122, wherein the second juncture section of the handle member is formed in a configuration complementary to the first juncture section of the striking member.

126. (new) The method of claim 122, wherein the step of forming the handle member comprises positioning plural composite layers adjacent each other to form a tubular member, and curing the layers.

127. (new) The method of claim 126, wherein the step of forming the handle member comprises the steps of positioning plural composite layers containing structural fibers therein adjacent each other such that each layer is tubular, and orienting the layers such that the majority of the layers have fibers extending at an angle less than about 50° relative to the longitudinal axis of the handle member.

128. (new) The method of claim 122, wherein at least one molding member is impressed against one of the inner surface of the first juncture section and the outer surface of the second juncture section during forming to produce spaced apart projections on at least one of the first and second juncture sections.

129. (new) The method of claim 128, wherein the projections are formed as elongate ribs extending substantially longitudinally along at least one of the first and second juncture sections.

130. (new) The method of claim 129, wherein the ribs are positioned such that at least a portion of the ribs provide the direct contact between the first and second juncture sections.

131. (new) The method of claim 128, wherein the molding member produces projections in a range of 0.002 to 0.005 inch in height.

132. (new) The method of claim 122, wherein the striking member is formed from a material selected from the group consisting of a metal, wood, a fiber reinforced composite material, and a non-metallic material.

133 (new) The method of claim 122, further comprising the step of inserting a weighed plug into the proximal end of the handle member, and coupling the weighted plug to the handle member.

134 (new) The method of claim 133, wherein the weighted plug weighs in the range of 0.5 to 7 ounces and a length in the range of 1.0 to 4.0 inches.

135 (new) The method of claim 122, further comprising the step of inserting a tubular insert within the striking member, such that when fully assembled the tubular insert can move independently of the striking member upon impact with a ball.